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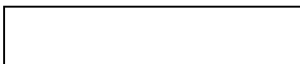
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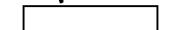
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Special Analyses



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LEBANON: Soviet Hostages

Sunni Muslim fundamentalists in Beirut are unlikely to release voluntarily their three surviving Soviet hostages. [] says that factions in West Beirut believe the Soviets are in the hands of the militia commanded by Shaykh Maher Hamud, an outspoken member of the Union of Islamic Ulama, which has ties to the fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood. Shia Amal and Druze militias have mounted an intensive search for the diplomats. []

Comment: Shaykh Hamud is a likely suspect in the kidnaping because of his deep sympathy for Shaykh Shaban, leader of the Sunni fundamentalist group embroiled in the Tripoli fighting. Moreover, Hamud, with a power base in Beirut, has the means to carry out such an operation. He is likely to hold the hostages as leverage against further Syrian attacks on Tripoli and its inhabitants. Amal and Druze efforts to find the hostages come as both militias are looking increasingly to the USSR for military supplies and training. []

[] CIA, DIA, NSA-

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